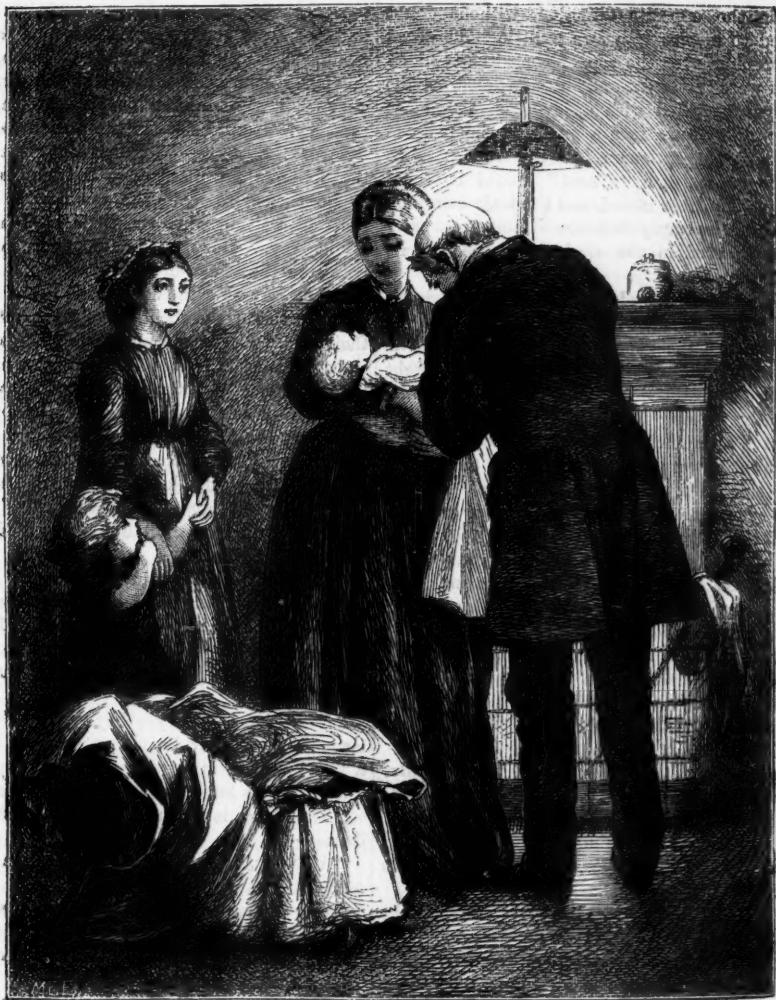


THE QUIVER

— Saturday, June 6, 1868. —



(Drawn by M. E. EDWARDS)

"Is she very ill, sir?"—p. 508.

APARTMENTS IN A QUIET STREET.

AT a house where an announcement of "Apartments to Let" appeared thrust in between the wire blind and the window, a little hard-featured man paused, at about four o'clock on a December afternoon. He cast his eyes over the windows with a sharp, scrutinising look. Apparently satisfied with the survey outside, he approached the door, pacing slowly over the

flag-stones leading from the gate. In another instant, the knocker fell with three regular raps, an equal space of time between every rap, and all of them hard and loud. His summons was answered by a tidy-looking girl, who, while she bade him enter, was casting sundry frowning looks in the opposite direction, without doubt intended to inspire with awe a little ruddy-faced child peeping over the top of the kitchen-stairs. If such were the intention it utterly failed, for the little eyes sparkled with a joy that melted the servant-girl's frown into a smile, as she ushered the hard-faced gentleman into the front parlour, intimating that her "missis" would be there directly. The door closed, and the little man took a chair near the empty fireplace, without apparently being influenced in the slightest degree by its desolate appearance.

The door opened, and the landlady entered, followed by the servant, who, having set a lamp upon the table, left the room, carrying off the little culprit with the ruddy cheeks and the bright eyes, who, against all rule, was found mischievously peeping in at the parlour-door. The light gave a more cheerful look to the room than it was wont to wear, and, as it fell upon the glasses on the sideboard, they sparkled like a galaxy of merry eyes just filled with joy, whose rays all seemed to centre on the little hard-faced man to make him welcome. Even the fire-irons at his feet gleamed as if they called him master, and reflected by anticipation a roaring fire in the desolate grate.

He had risen from his chair, and bowed coldly, as the landlady offered an apology for showing him into a room without a fire.

"Is this one of the apartments?" inquired the hard-faced man.

"This is the sitting-room," said the landlady, in a voice that trembled just a little; "the bedroom is the adjoining room to this."

"The same size?" he inquired.

"No, sir, rather smaller. Would you like to see it?"

She raised the lamp from the table, and the light fell full upon her young delicate features. She was beautiful—must have been more so, before that careworn look had become habitual in her face. As she drew near the door, followed by her visitor, she cast a quick glance up and down the hall, perhaps expecting the bright-eyed, ruddy little child had escaped, and was about to fill the house with his boisterous mirth. This, however musical to the young mother's ears, she felt sure would be voted a bore by the little hard-faced man at her elbow. Such a face as his never could be found with the heart that could love a child. There was something so harsh, so crude in his manners, appearance, and voice—something so repulsive in

the hardness of the whole man, that, she thought a child would run away and hide in the folds of its mother's dress the moment he drew near. But the ruddy face and the bright eyes were not there, so she passed on.

The bedroom was neatly furnished, and cleanly to a fault, but the hard features of the little man underwent no change as he surveyed the apartment. Three methodical nods of his bald head (a visible echo of his knock at the street-door) were all that indicated his approbation, or the contrary. He did not see the anxious, searching gaze of the young wife, nor the puzzled look that followed, not unmixed with trembling doubt, as he turned to leave the room. She stood in the hall waiting what the little hard-faced man might say. He passed her, and, instead of going to the street-door, turned again into the parlour. At this moment, and before the door could be closed, the shrill cry of an infant reached their ears. The young mother bit her lip as she shut the door, and again her eyes were fixed upon the stranger; but the hard features were unchanged. Could it be that he really loved children—or, at least, did not hate them? Such a thing might be possible, and she felt reassured as she sat down by the door. There would have been silence between them, but that the wail of the little child filled up the void, and at last died away in short, heavy sobs.

"There are children in the house?" said he, after waiting to hear if the cry had *quite* ceased.

She replied by a slight inclination of her head. She could not speak, there was a throbbing at her heart and a thickness in her throat that forbade it.

"Yes—they *will* cry—they always do!" continued the stranger, but in a tone more like what a man will use in argument than in anger. The difference was lost upon the young mother.

"The child is ill, sir," she said, "and—children—"

"Will cry," said the hard-faced man in the same tone; "they always do."

"She cannot help it, sir—she is so young and—so—so—ill!" Again there was that thickness in her throat, and it came with tears this time.

Again there was a long pause.

"The apartments to be taken by the quarter?" said the hard-faced man.

"Yes, sir, by the quarter."

"With a quarter's notice?" said the little man.

Before she could answer, the screams of the infant were again heard, and again the young mother bit her lip till the blood seemed bursting through the skin. It was vexing—so vexing—just as— But the thought came that the child was ill, and again not the landlady but the mother sat at the parlour-door. After a time came the

heavy sobs, and the wailing cry died away into silence as before.

"Children *will* cry—they always do!" apostrophised the hard-faced man. The tone of voice was the same as he had used not long ago, but, as then, she heard only the words.

Everything seemed decided now. A few minutes since, and no doubt he would have taken the apartments, and then what good news to tell her husband on his return! How she would have made him guess what it *could* be. How she would have enjoyed his puzzled look, and when she did out with it, to see his happy smile. And then to describe the hard-faced man, and then— But the airy castles were in ruins. Not the first young wife she who has gone a building in the air!

"The child is ill?" said the hard-faced man.

"Very ill, sir—worse to-day—and she cries a great deal."

"Ah! they *will* cry—they always do."

She caught the tone this time as well as the words.

"At what o'clock was she taken worse?"

"At twelve, sir."

The little hard-faced man sat lost in thought, and his companion watched him with a half-bewildered look, as if doubting the evidence of her senses. Could it be possible, and if possible, was it indeed a fact, that the hard, stony image before her was really but the outer covering—the shell—and that within was a gentle heart, full of compassion and strong human love? What mattered the shell, when the feeble cry of a sick child could break it? Surely it must have been the tears in her eyes that made the lines in that hard face soften and spread almost into smiles; but so they did—at least it appeared so to her; but then mothers are such fond, foolish things, Heaven help them! Their brightest pictures are all tinted with colours all the world knows *must* fade; and the sunlight of their fond and silly love, once bathed in tears, why all the world about them is in rainbows for a time!

"Subject to a quarter's notice?" said the hard-faced man. "And what are the terms—the rent I mean?"

She *must* have been looking through two great tears, for when they fell upon her hands, and she looked again, the little man sat there as stony and as hard as ever.

She made no answer, nor did he repeat the question. Both were silent for a time.

"Can I see the child?" said the hard-faced man to the landlady he had addressed a few moments before. The question was replied to by an incredulous look.

"You are surprised at the request—from a stranger too. No matter about that. Time in these cases is sometimes precious, so to lose none,

let me tell you I am in the medical profession—that is, I was, for lately I have given up practice. Can I see the child?"

The hard lines in that hard face were all growing soft again, as she looked towards it, and no doubt would have spread into smiles, only that, asking him to wait a minute, she turned to the door, fumbling for something in her pocket the while. It may be the world was in rainbows just then; certain it is that a mental picture of the little hard-faced man was in a perfect coruscation of light.

Scarcely had the young mother's footfall sounded on the stairs, when a ruddy little face peeped in at the half-open door. The bright eyes of the little culprit met those of the hard-faced man. There must have been some great similarity in those two beings, apparently so different, for the ruddy little face was not drawn away in fear, but advanced with a kind of bashful boldness right into the middle of the room. A child, after all, is often your true philosopher and physiognomist! With a confidence that would have graced Lavater himself, it needed but a glance, and in an instant the ruddy child had sidled up to the old man. When the little culprit's mother returned, the hard face was beaming with a real smile, as with the child on his knee, he held his watch to the upturned ear, and the two carried on a chorus, the burden of which was—"Tic-tic-tic."

"Fred!" exclaimed the young mother, as she entered the room.

The boy turned his eyes to the old man's face, and, assured that all was right, continued to repeat—"Tic-tic-tic." They were both children, and the boy knew it, though the world called his companion an old man.

By the nursery fire, in a little cradle, lay the sick child. The servant-girl sat beside it, rocking it to and fro, but a wailing cry of pain told that sleep was not a visitor there. The little hard-faced man was there too, hand in hand with his ruddy-faced playmate, but as if catching the truth from the old man's face, both sat silent and serious. The young mother took the servant's place, and gently drew away the shawl that had been thrown over the hoops of the cradle, to ward off the light from the sick child's face. At his bidding, she raised the infant in her arms, and drew nearer the lamp standing on the mantelshelf, where he had placed it. How anxiously the mother gazed into the face of the little man, as if she would read there a solution of all her hopes and fears!

Three measured nods of his hard, shining, bald head, which looked like a metal skull-cap, rubbed into a high state of polish, it appeared so hard and so bright! but not a word from his lips of life or death! He motioned the child back to the cradle, and asked for a pen and ink.

"Is she *very* ill, sir?" timidly asked the young mother. She could not bear the suspense, but held the child pressed in her bosom. She felt she could struggle with death, and ward off the terrible arrow, did she only know he was near.

"Do not alarm yourself, madam," said the little man, as he seated himself at a table to write; "we are in good time." He wrote his prescription. "You will have this prepared at once."

"But the child?"

"Has sickened with the measles."

"The measles! I must send Fred away then?"

"On the contrary; he must have them at some time—let him stay."

His mother's tearful looks, and an ill-defined notion that some terrible event was about to befall him, coupled with the hard look of the little man, brought the great tears into the boy's eyes, and he presently burst into a loud cry.

"Tic—tic—tic," said the hard-faced man, drawing out his watch. The boy climbed to his knee.

"Tic—tic—tic! Tic—tic—tic!" said the two children, playing with the watch.

In the little parlour which the hard-faced man and the little boy had lately quitted, stood a young man. He had been led—nay, almost dragged there from the street-door, which his wife had flown herself to open, carrying him off captive in spite of himself. The news was soon told—how that the lodgings were let; and then there was an eloquent description of the hard-faced man, with everything he said, and all he did, and how she had left him and Master Fred high friends in the nursery.

"Well, Laura, you must let me see this enigma, this hard, metallic gentleman, with a heart like a sponge-cake, soft and sweet! It is the funniest thing— But come."

They ascended to the nursery; Laura the meanwhile putting on a quiet, demure, landlady-like look, and her husband not a little curious about his future tenant.

On entering the nursery—whatever they had expected—they were not a little surprised. Overcome with fatigue, the servant-girl had fallen asleep at her post. She had been up the greater part of the night before, for the child had been fretful and restless. Master Fred stood with the watch still pressed to his ear; but to get it there he had to lean down, for the little hard-faced man was kneeling beside the cradle of the sick child, and was rocking it to and fro. On their entering he looked up, but continued rocking the cradle.

For a few moments they stood at the door in mute surprise, when Laura advanced to introduce her husband. The introduction was acknowledged on the part of the hard-faced man by three regular nods of his smooth, bald head, which swung to and fro as the cradle moved, and possibly might

have gone on for an hour or more, but that the servant, roused by the sound of her mistress' voice, rubbed her eyes, and resumed her task.

"I cannot tell you how much I feel indebted to you, sir, for this great kindness," said Laura's husband, drawing near to the little man, and assisting him to rise.

"Hush!" said he, with a nod and a look at the sick child. The father took the hint, and together they sat down at the table, and the conversation that ensued was carried on in a low voice. Presently, the servant being called away, the hard-faced man returned to the object of his visit, and inquired the terms at which the parlour and the adjoining room were to be let. Shert as the discussion was, often the little man rose, and on tip-toe sought the cradle of the sick child, now plunging his head under the shawl, and now gently rocking the cradle, as the child slept a little restless sleep. Not a sigh of the little voice escaped him—good, kind, tender-hearted, hard-faced little man!

After a time the young wife returned, announcing that tea was ready. Obedient to their request, the little man followed them down-stairs, and, at his own desire, the bright-eyed boy was his companion. They entered the same room—the parlour—which they had recently quitted. What a magical change was there. A roaring, crackling fire burned in the grate so desolate-looking awhile before. The kettle sent forth a long jet of steam as it bubbled and sang—singing, too, as if it would never get tired, pouring out its notes with such a ceaseless stream of breath. How pleasant, too, the song is—how cheerful! Then, it makes everybody friends with itself and with everybody else, and everybody feels contented and happy, and at home.

Some such feeling was surely creeping over the honest heart of the hard-faced man, as he sipped his tea and shared his muffin with the bright-eyed, ruddy little culprit at his elbow. Then he looked at the fire and he nodded his head, and then at the kettle, and then at the glass on the sideboard, which sparkled brighter than ever. Then, somehow his foot got upon the fender, a sure sign he felt himself at home—quite at home—and at last he said so.

Was it really a fact, that the fire burned brighter, and the kettle sang louder and louder its song of home, or had the young wife's eyes and ears deceived her? Somehow, too, there was quite a prismatic look about them, and when she looked at her husband with those loving eyes of hers, she could scarcely see him for the rainbows.

Now, the watch had gone tic-tic-tic a long, long time—not that any one counted it—when the little hard-faced man rose to depart. In the hall he stood still, for his quick ear caught the feeble cry of the sick child.

"It is hard for children to bear pain," said he; "they can't bear it. They *will* cry—they always do."

Nobody mistook the tone this time.

Presently the hard, even tread of the little man was heard on the garden flagstones, and then in the street. How very hard his tread was, so firm, so decided, as he turned into the busy highway, now almost deserted, and as he buttoned the last button of his great-coat firmly over his chest everybooy, as they passed him, thought, "What a hard-faced, hard-hearted little man!" People will look at the outside, and judge by it, too. But as

his heart was under his great-coat, what could be expected when it was buttoned up—so firmly, too, and so tight?

There were calculations over and over again, and joy, and tears, and congratulations, and through and about them all hovered the shadow of the little hard-faced man, till the last embers died away in the grate of the lodgings—now let—in the quiet street.

And up-stairs, too, hovered the same dim shadow over the cradle of the sick child, and was only lost in prayer, or at night in the fitful picture of a passing dream.

FIELD FLOWERS.

I.

DAILY I gather for garlands of flowers, but I know not why;
Daily I weave and bind them, and bind and weave till they die.
Hot and faint with the fever of eager fingers and palms,
Soon they sicken, and wither, and sigh out their last sweet balms.

II.

Day by day, and the days are as years, though the nights be long;
Morn by morn the garlands are gay, and dewy, and strong;
Eve by eve my wreathes lie strewed in the dust, and dead:
Also I laugh and weep at the flow'rs, and grey hairs in my head.

III.

Would I were living like these in the dewy orient hours,
Or that I died at eve with the same fair, perishing flow'rs!
Tender blooms of the field, that flourish and fade in a day,
Sweet is the fate to be plucked from the sod-clinging root and the clay.

IV.

Dead is the strong deep fibre that dwelt in the warmth of the earth,
Drawing sweet juices of joy that budded in verdure of mirth;
Gnaw on, O pitiless worm, that wouldst leave me a tithe of life,
Stay, of thy merciless mercy, and hack with thy jaws of the knife.

V.

Where be the fickle hands that fondled the wreathes I wove?
Where be the full, false lips that beguiled me with lores of love?
Faithless feet that threaded the down-blown waves of the grass?
Fathomless eyes, ere they hardened and shut on my soul like glass?

VI.

All have turned to the guiles and blooms of a fairer face,
Beaming and flushing with joy for to-day and a little space.
"Faithful for aye and a day," he saith, and to me once said:
Also I laugh and weep at the flow'rs, and grey hairs in my head. B.

BROKEN CISTERNS.

"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jer. ii. 13.

WE all of us know well the character of him who, in the name of the Lord his God, addressed to his unheeding countrymen the warnings from which this text is taken. He was one who, in the course of a melancholy and persecuted life, gained the experience which added such energy to his lamentations over the ruins of his country.

The soul of poetry within him, and the powers of exquisite pathos which he possessed, made him well fitted to perform the office which fell to his lot, of chanting a dirge over the ruins of his country, of performing, as it were, the funeral obsequies for the last of her kings, and giving utterance to a sad requiem over a desolate city, a ruined temple, and a captive people. Throughout that most

mournful period of Jewish history, he stands out to view, the one central figure round which gathers all the interest of the tottering kingdom. His is the one warning voice which makes itself heard amid the din of hostile armies, amid the contest of Egypt and Assyria, for his beloved fatherland. He alone for more than twenty years, during which the death-agony of Judah was protracted—he alone is striving to ward off, or at least to mitigate, the impending blow. His eagle eye saw from afar the surrounding nations swallowed up, one by one, in the advancing tide of Assyrian conquest. Long he struggled to avert from Jerusalem the inevitable tempest, and restore its former strength to the state by re-uniting it to its forsaken God. But he spoke to heedless ears and hardened hearts; and it only remained for him to behold the sad accomplishment of all his darkest prophecies, and record in language of unrivalled pathos the passionate sorrow of his patriotic heart. Yet he knew that it was but the fulfilment of his own prophecies. He knew that all this was the anger, the well-deserved anger, of an offended God, who by his voice had warned the nation of its danger; and who held their desertion of him such a wonderful and horrible crime, that he called for the wonder of all creation. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

This, then, is the original and primary application of the words of Jeremiah. They are a declaration of the horror felt by God at the desertion of his people. But I would take them now in a secondary and applied sense, yet one exactly parallel to that which they bore on their first utterance. Is not this hewing of cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water, the constant occupation of a very large portion of mankind? There is an insatiable craving in the heart of man for something to support the inner life of his soul; there is a universal longing for some source whence water may be obtained; for some supply whence we may draw continually a draught to satisfy the thirst within us. Look through every phase of the religious and social history of man, and you will find that this is what he is perpetually seeking. There are those to whom God has not revealed himself as the one source of all satisfaction—as the one fountain of living waters. The longings of their nature expended themselves upon a vague philosophy, or strove to satisfy themselves with the ideal conceptions of human ingenuity. But with these the words are concerned neither in their original nor in their applied sense. They speak of the horror felt in heaven of those who, having once received a revelation of God's truth,

afterwards turn away into apostasy from him; of those who, having once been brought near to the fountain of living waters, yet turn back again to cisterns of their own hewing. Therefore is it that they are peculiarly applicable to those, whether Jews under the old or Christians under the new dispensation, upon whom the light of God's truth has most brightly shone. They are the favoured ones, who have been given to drink of the water of life. Therefore is theirs the greater sin, and theirs shall be the more terrible fall, if they turn from that heavenly draught to hew them out broken cisterns.

Take, first, the case of the Jews under the old dispensation, to whom belongs their primary application. Of all the nations of the world, none had been favoured as they had been with the presence and guidance of Jehovah. Others, indeed, he had led, for his providence extends to all his creatures. Others he had led by other means; but the Jewish nation he had especially chosen, to place his name there, that they should be to him a peculiar people, educated in his own way, to receive in due time even a fuller revelation of himself. What wonder, then, that he should call even upon the heavens to be horribly afraid, when they, his own children, rebelled against him and served other gods! Yet so it was. The ways of God are not as the ways of man, and it was hard for them, in a material age, to keep their faith with a God who showed himself in no material form. This was the secret of their idolatry. They had the same feeling with the nations who surrounded them; that their eyes must behold some similitude of that which they adored. And, perhaps, we shall not be transgressing the bounds of due reverence, if we look upon that dispensation of which Moses was the mediator, as a condescension on the part of God to that tendency in man; if we regard the ark, and the tabernacle, and the ceremonial worship as intended to satisfy the longing for externals in the hearts of that generation; as calculated to educate the people by slow degrees into that spiritual worship which, in after times, was to replace it. But how often does the evil heart of man pervert the merciful designs of God! How often do we stubbornly refuse to be led even by the gentlest means! How often do we refuse the fountain of living waters, and hasten to cisterns of our own hewing! The whole history of the Jews is but one long night of apostasy from God, whose darkness is only broken by fitful gleams of light, when some Josiah of his age enjoins upon his people a repentance only too brief. Then they would return for a space to the fountain of living waters, only to increase their condemnation by again deserting Him.

But the age of actual material idolatry passes away, and we come to an idolatry of a far more

subtle kind in the ages immediately preceding the coming of Christ. I allude, of course, to the traditions and ceremonies with which the Pharisees had surrounded the worship of God. What was this but the hewing out of broken cisterns? What was it but placing their own inventions, the work of their own hands, in the place of God; striving to satisfy with those outward forms the longing for religious happiness which each man felt in his heart? Theirs was but idolatry in a more subtle, and therefore more dangerous, form; idolatry clothing itself in the garments of its own peculiar age. To them, too, were the words of Jeremiah applicable, for they, too, had tasted of the living water, yet had turned away to cisterns of human workmanship.

But the revolution in the religious history of the world wrought by the coming of Christ in the flesh, carried men back for a time to purity of religion. Alas! that the evil tendency of the human heart should so soon have corrupted that purity, and led men again to desert the fountain of living waters. We all know how the religion of Christ was perverted to become the religion of a priesthood; how the one sacrifice of his body upon the cross—the great central fact of our religion—was repeated and travestied in the perpetual sacrifice of the mass; how the one Mediator between God and man was neglected and dishonoured by the substitution of a host of other intercessors; how, in short, the word of God was made of none effect by traditions, and the precepts of Christ and his Gospel, the one fountain of living waters, neglected and despised, while mankind were bidden to slake the thirst of their souls in the muddy waters of a grasping sacerdotalism. From all these errors the Reformed churches have now, for three hundred years, been happily delivered. God grant that what is called the religious revival of the present day may not carry us back into them ere we are aware of it. Then should we, indeed, be guilty of the sin denounced by Jeremiah. Once having been privileged with a Reformed religion, and sinking back into Romish error, we should just as really be committing this sin, as did Israel of old when they forsook the institutions of Moses, and did homage to Baal and Asharothe.

Thus far I have regarded these words historically, and applied them to cases in which our own personal religion has only a contemplative, not a practical interest. Let us now turn to rather a different view of the subject, and see whether there is not within us some power leading us, not like the Jews of old, to the worship of false gods; not, perhaps, into Romish error, but teaching us to seek religious happiness from other sources besides the worship of the true God; teaching us to draw that nourishment which every soul must and will have, rather

from cisterns of our own hewing, than from Him who cries to every one that thirsteth, "Come ye to the waters of life."

First, then, there are those who strive to satisfy the thirst of their soul from the pleasures which the world gives;—men who, calling themselves Christians, are yet in their hearts the servants of sin;—men who, like the Samaritans of old, feared the Lord and served their own gods, not seeing in their blindness how inconsistent they were in so doing. The cases are exactly parallel: the Samaritans found themselves in a strange land, where Jehovah had been worshipped, and they felt that they, too, must worship him, or some dire calamity would befall them; they feared the Lord, but the mere animal instinct of fear was not enough to induce them to give up their own gods: and so they devised what they, doubtless, considered a happy combination of two different worships: they feared the Lord, and served their own gods. Just so is it with those who have not realised the teaching of Christ, that "ye cannot serve God and Mammon." When the attempt is made, the worship which is given to God is only just so much as in our foolishness we think will suffice to ward off his anger. It is only because we are afraid of him that we serve him. The true service of the heart is all given to our own gods. And if you doubt this, take a great practical test. The time will soon come—nay, it comes every day of our lives—when our duty to God clashes with our service of Mammon. See, then, which has to give way; whichever power be stronger in our hearts must soon show itself by unmistakable signs. We cannot draw our supplies from the fountain of living waters, and at the same time from cisterns of our own hewing. "He to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are to whom we obey." But, I think, that when we speak of the service of the world, we hardly understand clearly what Holy Scripture intends by the expression; and as this is, undoubtedly, one of the chief sources whence men strive to draw their happiness, let me briefly consider it here.

St. John puts it very concisely: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is of the world." Not the flesh itself, not the eye itself, not the life itself; but the lust and pride thereof. It is not the love of man which is forbidden. This was the Pharisaic notion. It was upon the due observance of the social affections that they wrote "corban" only as an excuse for not exercising them at all. The teaching of Christ is: "He that loveth not his brother, his wife, his family, his friends, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" Nor is it the love of our worldly occupation or profession which is forbidden. On the contrary, St. Paul

bids us run with diligence the course that is set before us, remembering always that he who is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much.

But the worldliness which is condemned in Holy Scripture, is the worldly spirit. The affections fixed on that which is outward, unreal, and transitory; the lust of pleasures which affect only the senses; the pride of men's opinion or our own position. In short, that love of the world which if a man have, the love of the Father is not in him. But let the love of God once take possession of his heart, and how quickly will it expel all that former unreal affection! If a man do but once drink of the fountain of living water, he will find there all—yea, infinitely more than all—that his soul needs, and he will soon cease from the vain toil of hewing out for himself cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

It is almost needless for us to inquire the reasons why the cisterns which man hews out for himself are only broken cisterns that can hold no water. He hews them out with infinite care and toil; he exhausts all his energy and all his ingenuity to provide happiness for himself, and satisfy the craving thirst within him; and then, when he has exhausted every device that human cleverness can suggest; when he has ransacked the world's treasury, thinking that he can find in that the good he seeks, he discovers that it is but a broken cistern after all. It is only at the command of God that the rock is smitten, and the fountain gushes forth with living waters. It is written on every page of creation that the world passeth away, and the glory of it. Everything changes. The things which are, are changed from those which were, and still are changing with each fleeting moment. Change is the law of natural being; only that which is supernatural—only God in his infinity—remains unchangeable. Therefore it is that the soul within man cannot find satiety in that which is merely natural. It soars upwards to that which is superior to nature—to that which has affinity with itself; refusing to be tied down to earth by the fetters of its earthly tabernacle. Surely this is a mighty proof of its immortality—a sure sign that it is made for some sphere of being higher than this which it now enjoys. I can imagine nothing clearer than that the existence which is satisfied with the present, is not made for the future. But when I find the universal confession on the lips and in the hearts of those who have had the best opportunity of tasting the pleasures of this present life, that not only the things themselves pall upon the taste, but also the desire of them passeth away, then I can have no hesitation in believing—even without the authority of Holy Writ—that there must be some sphere of being

in which these desires will be satisfied; some higher spiritual life, wherein "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

There is one other consideration in connection with this subject—that of a danger, more subtle than that of the worldly man, a danger which may at times beset even the best of Christians—the danger of mistaking the externals of religion for religion itself. These should be only the outward expressions of the inward spiritual life. It is true, indeed, that that inner life cannot exist without finding its utterance in outward acts of worship; but the converse of this is not equally true, the outward may be there without the inward. And, perhaps, there is no one in so great danger as he who has lulled to sleep his conscience with works of charity and religious observance. He has placed his cistern so close to the fountain, that it seems as if it must catch some of the living water; but it is a broken cistern still, though hewn with all the toil and care of a lifetime. In the time of our direst need we shall turn to it in vain. Happy are we if we learn the lesson ere it be too late, that love to God and the realisation of his love to us as measured by the cross of Christ, is the one and only source whence the cravings of the immortal soul can find their fullest and completest satisfaction.

Let us notice, moreover, the contrast between ourselves and the Israelite of old, to whom these words were addressed. Even in his case, God held it a terrible thing that he should forsake the fountain of living waters. Yet God had not vouchsafed to him such knowledge of himself as we now possess. All the gentler attributes of the Divine nature were hidden behind a veil. Then he was revealed as Power; now he is revealed as Love—love incarnate in the person of Christ.

How much greater, then, shall be our condemnation if we neglect so great a salvation! if we strive to draw from earthly sources that which He only can supply. Only the love of God can drive out from the heart the love of the world. An empty heart there cannot be. It must devote its energies and affections to some object. It must drink of the water of life, or else hew out cisterns for itself. It must honour God, or else dishonour him. It cannot remain neutral. It dishonours him if it chooses that which is low and vile and transitory, instead of that which is high and heavenly, and fadeth not away. It dishonours him if it thinks to serve him by the letter of the law, instead of the spirit of Christ. It dishonours him if it forgets its own immortal nature, and omits to prepare itself by its life here for the life which it must live in the future. It dishonours him if it forms false notions of him, and pictures him as a God who would drive us into holiness by force or terror, instead of that which he really



(Drawn by B. BRADLEY.)

"Tender blooms of the field, that flourish and fade in a day."—p. 597.

is, a God all gentleness, and love, and mercy, whose Holy Spirit is ever on the watch to catch the first faint longings for that peace which the world cannot give; ready to set before the awakened soul the life and death of the Saviour as the only satisfaction of all spiritual desire, the one fountain of living waters; ready to dwell with that soul henceforth as an ever-present Comforter, leading and guiding into all truth.

What, then, is the test by which to try ourselves? Simply: are we living so that the will of God may be done in us and by us? Are we

glorifying God, whether by our life or by our death? If so, then have we made the spirit of Christ's cross our own. We have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. The power of the world is gone, the enticements of the flesh are gone. The spirit of Christ is all in all. We have forsaken the broken cisterns that could hold no water, and turned again to the fountain of living waters, realising now and for ever, on this and on the other side the grave, his blessed promise, who said: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst."

A BRAVE LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SHADOW ON THE HEARTH.

THE burly man had established himself at the table on which he had placed his hat and his stick. The room was very cold, but he must have walked himself into a heat; he was wiping his forehead with his handkerchief when John came in.

John was, evidently, not at all glad to see him; on the very threshold of the matter, this fact was apparent; he was not glad to see him, and, moreover, he had a suspicion that the visit boded no good.

"Good evening, Mr. Isaacs," said John.

"The same to you," replied the other, carelessly.

John sat down at the side of the table. As he regarded externals, the two men were in pretty much the same position as before: sitting face to face; a fireless grate, and one solitary candle which was dimly burning, between them.

"Any news stirring to-night?" said John, breaking a rather oppressive silence, and speaking evasively.

"None that I've heard of," replied the burly man, who was feeling in his pocket.

The eye of John Humphreys noted this movement with some uneasiness.

"Wife got home?" asked the burly man, bringing forth a leather pocket-book, of an unmistakable business character, and flinging it on the table.

"Yes," said John, his eye on the pocket-book, "she is."

"Ah!" There was a sinister expression in the tone of the monosyllable. John did not speak. It was very chill and miserable here, with Mr. Isaacs sitting opposite: very bright and genial there, with Rachel. He felt like a bird suddenly caught and caged.

The burly man was deliberately opening his pocket-book. "You see, Mr. Humphreys," he began, "this is like to be a rather ugly affair, between you and me."

"How so?" said John, quickly.

"Why, because, you see, things aint just pleasant," said Mr. Isaacs, scratching his ear, while his attention

was wholly fixed on the pocket-book. "One can't see one's way clear in this world; there are such turns and twists."

"What has happened, pray?" asked John, in the same quick tone. The distance between himself and the genial atmosphere where Rachel abode began to increase.

"Well, you see, what has happened is this," said Mr. Isaacs, who had now his pocket-book open before him; "I have lost a mint of money, this last fortnight—more fool I for doing it!"

"Doing what? and what have you lost?" asked John, getting a trifle impatient.

"Well, you see, I need must speculate. Never mind how, it isn't to the purpose, and would not, in the least, interest you; but I'm the loser, and that's where the shoe pinches."

John was silent; a certain rather loose transaction rose to his mind; and it occurred to him that, having largely built his faith on Mr. Isaacs, he might chance to find himself outwitted. But, for the present, he said nothing; he was like the ostrich when it hides its head in the sand, and when, as certain as can be, up will come the hunter!

"Now, this affair has flung me into difficulties. I have no need to hide it from you, John Humphreys, —into serious difficulties."

Nearer, nearer comes the hunter, but the ostrich goes on hiding. John Humphreys said not a word.

"There is but one way I can turn," continued Mr. Isaacs, fingering a document which John knew but too well.

"Have you got the money, pray?"

"Money!—what money?" stammered John, like a man taken by surprise.

"What money! Why, the money old Sylvester borrowed of your father, to be sure. Have you got it?"

John did not immediately reply. Mr. Isaacs knew, as well as could be, that he had not got it.

"You were going to proceed to extremities, you know," continued he, still fingering the document; "that was, let me see—when was it?"

"Six weeks ago," replied John, mechanically.

"Ah, yes, six weeks! Time to have sacked Rome!" and the burly man laughed at his own wit; "so you have got it, haven't you?"

"No, I haven't," stammered John.

Poor fellow! to be put on the rack in this cold, dismal room, while she sat close by, expecting every moment he would come back.

Come back? It seemed that half-an-hour had gone already!

It was too bad to meet with a stumble, on the very threshold of his new happiness.

"If you haven't, it will be so much the worse for you," continued Mr. Isaacs; "you know this writing, don't you?"

"Yes," said John.

"You engage, in black and white, to pay me back the money at request."

"Yes, but," burst out John, "you said that was a mere form of speech. You told me the money was as good to you as an investment; you know you did; and that you were never likely——"

"Hush, Mr. Humphreys, if you talk so loud your wife will hear you!"

"Of course," continued John, eagerly, and lowering his voice, "I never dreamed that you would call it back in six weeks. I call it a swindle—a regular swindle!"

"You may call it what you like, but I'm good in law, and that's the matter to be considered; now all you have to do is just to pay me."

"But I can't," exclaimed John, his distress getting the better of his anger; "I have nothing to pay with."

"Why don't you stump up the Sylvesters? I would, this very day! what are you sparing them for?"

John's face looked very blank indeed. Another little transaction, scarcely more wise than the other, occurred to him, with remarkable unpleasantness.

"You can't be devoted enough to sacrifice yourself for the sake of Mr. Sylvester?" continued the burly man, snuffing the candle; "if you are, you're scarce the article I take you for."

John's face denoted the most extreme perplexity.

"Stump them up, I tell you!" cried the other; "put an execution in the house! Why not?"

"I can't," said John, despondingly; "no, I can't do that."

"Why not, pray; what is to hinder you?"

"I was going to put an execution in the house," said John, slowly and deliberately; "I wish to my heart I had! But there came a lawyer——"

"A lawyer!" gasped Mr. Isaacs.

"Yes, a lawyer; and he told me I should be a fool if I carried out my threat, and should get only half the money. He said a turn was coming in the Sylvester affairs, and one of them—I'm sure I don't know which—was likely to come into a great fortune. He took a vast deal of trouble to argue the matter, and he made it so plain, at last, that I gave in. I thought I was doing the best for myself," added John, ruefully.

"Very likely. But you need not be crestfallen about it," said the burly man, cheerfully. "Just give me your orders, and I'll see that they are carried out. You are not obliged to keep faith with a lawyer. Bless you! he won't expect it."

"But I must!" cried John, in a tone of distress.

"I see it clearly now. I have been entrapped, all ways. He made me sign a paper promising to wait six months."

"Did he? Then all I have to say is, John Humphreys, you are the most unlucky dog that ever lived!"

John groaned under the weight of the epithet.

"Because, you see, whatever comes, I must have my money," continued the other, briskly. "I can't afford to be ruined."

John pointed to the door. His face was very pale.

"My wife is in yon room, Mr. Isaacs," said he, tremulously; "my wife of a week old. I've brought her home this very night. What do you think will become of us, if you don't show us any mercy?"

"Mercy! It is not a matter of mercy, my friend. I can't justly say what would become of you. I know what my fate would be, if I let you off. Just this—a debtors' prison!" He rose as he said it.

John hid his face in his hands.

"You will, perhaps, think the matter over," continued the burly man. "I shouldn't like to have to serve a writ, you know, on an old friend—and a week from to-day——"

"A week!" exclaimed John, horrified.

"Yes; not an hour longer! It is more than I can afford. But to an old friend——"

"Hark ye, Mr. Isaacs," said John, rising also, and with blanched face and kindling eyes confronting him, "if I'd known you'd been a knave, I'd have had no dealings with you. As it is, I'd have you leave the house, sir, and not insult me, by calling yourself a friend!"

"I am quite agreeable. Indeed, I have stayed too long. It is cruel to part husband and wife in this way. Good night, John Humphreys, and a week to-day, remember!"

"I shall not be likely to forget," said John, sternly.

When the other man was gone, came the worst. Then John strode up and down the dark, fireless room, feeling that he was a ruined man—ruined as far as his brightest prospects went.

And there was Rachel! He must go back to her.

As the front door shut, the door of her room had opened, and a little whisper came stealing along the passage.

"John, dear, are you coming?"

He would not tell her. No; whatever it might cost him. How bright she looked, how happy! How she came to meet him, nestling her head on his shoulder, and scolding him for being so long away. How glad she was that they were alone again, and that "intolerable person," as she called him, was fairly shut out of the house. How she put away her work, and came and sat by him, and talked to him, and laughed in the gaiety of her heart!

No; he could not tell her—not then. Yet, in spite of all, a kind of shadow fell on the hearth, that had been so bright. In spite of his efforts, John was not altogether himself. He was absent and preoccupied; and now and then a look of deep disquiet stole over his face. Rachel saw it, ere the evening had come to an end. She felt the shadow dimming her sunny landscape. It was strange, mysterious, and inscrutable! But John would tell her nothing. No; not a word!

CHAPTER XXII.

JOSEPHINE'S PICTURE.

In the days of which we are speaking, Raymond Sylvester was not often seen in the streets of Newbury. When he was visible, it was a stray glimpse caught of him at the carriage window. But one fine morning, when the sun shone brighter than it had done of late, and, to use a homely expression, the crows had picked up the dirt, Raymond, in elegant morning costume, and not a hair out of place, was walking leisurely up the pavement that fronted the shops in the market-place.

The carriage was not far off, it stood at the corner, the reins gathered into the hands of the old coachman on the box; while the footman, having alighted to let his master out, remained standing by the door, ready at a moment's notice to let him in again.

Raymond, then, was walking, at an easy pace along the pavement. The shops were very gay. Newbury was proud of her shops; but Raymond, who seemed in a preoccupied state, scarcely deigned to look at them, until at last he came to the great shop, at the corner, and then he was obliged to look. He was going in here, to make a purchase for Alice.

It was a stationer's shop, on rather a grand scale, and the attractive part of it consisted in the display of pictures in the windows. Some were engravings of considerable value, others were original drawings and water-colour paintings, and these Raymond stood a moment to contemplate. He was a bit of a painter himself, and had a great love for art, and these pictures were too good to be passed by.

He stood a moment, and then his heart gave a convulsive leap, and his whole frame trembled. One of the pictures he knew quite well. It met him as a familiar friend: it had once belonged to Josephine!

He remembered her doing it. It had been an outdoor sketch originally, and she had worked it up at leisure. He had sat by her as she did so. How vivid the scene was in his memory! The pretty, cheerful room, the sweet, tranquil face of his beloved, the peaceful moments which had gone by, never, alas! to return—yes, he remembered it well!

How came the picture here? Raymond's cheek crimsoned, and the hot tears gushed to his eyes. It was for sale. For sale! This little gem that was to have adorned their home—his home, and Josephine's—now thrust rudely forth on the world, to the highest bidder.

The thought was very dreadful, it stung him to the

quick. It brought back the old passionate longing; it opened the wound wide!

He stood gazing at the rural spot depicted by her hand: the stream, with broad leaves of water-lilies lying open to the sun, the old mill, the sweep of country, the cornfield yonder—with gleaners, in picturesque costume, some carrying bundles of corn on their heads. There was not a stroke, not a line, in that picture, but he knew it. The man's heart, hard as it may seem, was racked with cruel pain. It took some moments to recall himself to composure. He could have wept and sobbed.

When he had recovered himself, and was again the Raymond Sylvester of old, he stepped into the shop. It was a hazardous game he was playing. He might break down, spite of his Stoicism and his Sylvester dignity. Yes, break down, and be weak and pitiful as a woman.

But he must get that picture into his keeping. He would not have it—one of his own love-tokens, so he regarded it—drifting on the current of a careless, unthinking world—a world that did not know his Josephine! No, he would snatch it away. He would hide it in some secret spot, and cherish it, his whole life long, for the sake of Josephine.

He stood before the counter, cold and self-possessed as ever. He asked for what he wanted with a voice as calm as it had ever been. And then he said he should like that picture.

The man reached it down in obsequious haste. It was quite a bargain, he said, glibly; painted with no idea of sale, but the party had been reduced, and would be thankful to get only half its value.

While he spoke, Raymond's cheeks tingled, and the muscles of his face quivered; but he kept the command of himself. Happily, there was no need of much speaking, or his voice might have betrayed him. The man told him the price unasked, and Raymond paid it down. If it had taken his last farthing, he would have had that picture!

He carried it away. He had not dared to inquire about her, where she was, what she was doing, or suffering. But when he got into the street again, he gave an eager look around, as though he were entertaining the vague hope that he might find her. He could not go back to the carriage all at once; he was in too great misery. He was on his way to Brooklyn Hall, to pay a visit to the widow, and all this had happened to him.

What was that figure on the other side of the street—a slight figure, but graceful, and with the bearing of a gentlewoman; and habited in mourning, and with a thick crape veil? His heart beat strangely, he was almost unmanned at the very sight, for it was Josephine!

He knew her in a minute. He could have rushed to her, undemonstrative as he was, and fallen at her feet, and wept, and prayed to clasp her to his heart; but of course he did not; Raymond Sylvester rarely overstepped the mark. She was walking slowly, and, as it seemed, feebly; but, then, she had been ill. Yes, he knew that. He thought of the

sweet face, hidden by the veil, and guessed that he should find it altered. Well, was he not altered? Had not he suffered?

He crossed the street, by an impulse too irresistible to be controlled. She did not see him, for she was some steps in advance. He walked, for a few moments, behind her, and then he ventured to come close up, yea, even to touch her garment.

"Josephine!"

It was the sweet, low, insidious voice that she had heard so often. The poor girl stopped, and a stifled cry was heard from behind the thick crape that concealed her features; not such a concealment, though, but Raymond could see the pale, sharpened face and sunken eye; not such a concealment, but that he could realise the wreck she had become!

"Josephine!"

He said it again. He might think she had not heard, but she had. Her whole frame was in a tremor. She put out her hand to motion him away. And he knew he had no business there, but he could not go.

"See, Josephine, I have bought your picture!"

She had stopped a moment, and now she looked hurriedly up at him, tears were in her eyes.

"I bought it, because everything is precious to me that belongs to you; because I shall never part with it, while I live."

She had begun to walk on again. He walked beside her.

"I think I am mad, Josephine, to be here, to speak to you, to look at you again. If you have any pity for me, you will tell me——"

His voice broke down, and he turned away his face.

"What do you want to know?" she asked.

He turned to her again, with a quick, hurried gesture.

"I want to know where you are, what has befallen you, since—since we parted? The suspense tortures me!"

"If you care to inquire," said Josephine, calmly, "I will tell you. I am in lodgings, earning my bread."

"Oh, Josephine!"

It was all he said, and they walked on side by side. When they came to the end of the street, Josephine stopped. Then Raymond spoke again.

"Will you tell me where you live?"

She paused a moment. She had wonderful self-control, or she would have wept aloud.

"It cannot interest you," she said at length. "Our ways lie wide apart now, and ever will do."

"Then you will not tell me?"

"I think not."

There was another silence. They stood opposite. A casual meeting of two friends, it seemed to be—no more. But a scene in many a life's drama takes place with no more sensation than this. When they had stood thus a few moments, he began to say, in a low, hurried tone—

"Josephine, if God ever forgives me, will you forgive?"

"I have forgiven," said she, quickly.

"And will you sometimes let me speak to you, or look at you, even afar off, Josephine?" Oh, my love! my love!" said he, in a tone of passionate fondness, and holding out his hands to her.

But she withdrew a few paces. She would not let him take her hands. No; the thread was broken; they were on opposite sides of the stream, and could not join hands again. She was not resentful. She knew the whole sad story well. She knew that her heart and Raymond's were one still; that she could not uproot the affection which had grown so long, nor could he. He had been base to leave her; but was she not portionless? Would it not be poverty mating with poverty? If he had been base, it was because the ordeal had been beyond his strength. The rotten principles of his race hung round him like fetters. His nobler self would have been true to her, and shielded and cherished her. But the Sylvester had sacrificed her. Tears were swimming in her eyes. She saw his anguish, and it was far deeper than hers; for remorse was an ingredient in his anguish, and Josephine had no remorse. He must suffer. She knew he would. It was not for her to whisper comfort; oh, no! Her lips were sealed!

She turned to go. It was time she did. She to her humble refuge; he back to his home. The sooner they parted the better.

He saw she meant to go, and he pressed forward with a sudden vehemence, and took her hand. He had it in his grasp an instant only, and then he dropped it, and was gone. But as he turned away, there burst from his lips, with a kind of passionate wail.

"Oh, my love! my love!"

Raymond was not usually demonstrative. To be demonstrative was a crime in the eyes of the Sylvesters.

"Always preserve your self-control, my son," was the earliest advice his mother had given him.

When Josephine was gone, he had to fall back on these first principles. He could easily have broken down. He could easily have flung the Sylvester dignity to the winds, and fought with his whole soul to get back his love. But then the old fabric must fall down like the house on the sand!

Pity he could not do as other men have done, and support its decaying walls by manly industry and the golden meed of labour. He had youth, and intellect, and the field was wide and open, and the blessing of watchful Providence was there.

But no! If he tried that experiment, it would be a novelty. It would compromise the dignity of his race, and forfeit his birthright.

His birthright was to sit with folded hands, and be a gentleman.

"No Sylvester had ever worked, or ever would," his mother had told him.

Besides, what time was there to enter the only branches of industry suited to him? Professions are not caught up in a day. They have to be approached by many a long route of patience and

persevering energy. And here was the doom even at the doors!

He walked back to his carriage. He showed no outward sign of discomposure. The footman held open the door as his master stepped in. Then he climbed to his place, and the carriage drove on.

The coachman knew where he had to drive. He turned his horses' heads towards Brooklyn.

Raymond sat erect and self-possessed till the town was cleared. There was no fear that any one should see him. Then he crouched down, his face buried in his hands, his great agony taking hold upon him. Then you would scarce have known him to be Raymond Sylvester.

A sound roused him. He slowly raised himself from his attitude of dejection and looked up. A horse was coming along at a brisk trot. Then the horseman drew up alongside the carriage, which had drawn up as well.

"Good morning, Mr. Sylvester," said the well-known voice of the family lawyer. "Out for a drive, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Raymond, hastily.

"You look to want air. I can't congratulate you much on your appearance."

Raymond forced a kind of smile.

"It's a fine morning to get out," continued the lawyer, still looking in at the carriage-window; "I've had a gallop myself. The doctor says I am getting too fat by half."

"Indeed," said Raymond, absently.

"Yes;—a word with you, Mr. Sylvester," and he came nearer, and spoke in a low, cautious tone; "going to Brooklyn?"

Raymond turned pale.

"I think I am," stammered he.

"All right! You remember an old adage: 'Happy the—'"

"Oh, hush—hush!" cried Raymond, shuddering; "it has not come to that. No, and perhaps never will."

"Oh! I misunderstood you then. I thought you gave me instructions—"

"Never mind what I did," said Raymond, in a suppressed voice; "there are some positions in which

a man gets placed when he knows not what he does."

"Exactly; well, I was wanting to see you. That fellow—Isaacs, I think his name was—who lent the other fellow the money—you know what I mean—"

"Yes—yes."

"Well, he has come to grief; has lost in some silly speculation, and falls back on Humphreys—that's the name—falls back on Humphreys, and insists on being paid."

Raymond turned paler still.

"Now, Humphreys is an honest sort of a man, and has just married, and settled in a farm he bought with this said money. It will go hard with him, I am afraid."

"Will it?" said Raymond, anxiously.

"Yes; he will have to sell the farm. I don't know what else he can do. I am really sorry."

"Sell the farm?" repeated Raymond, mechanically.

"Yes. I tied him off you know for six months. I think it was a dodge of Isaacs. He got paid for the accommodation. The fact is, if people will do things without a lawyer," added Mr. Carlton, complacently, "they are sure to be taken in. Humphreys has been sold."

Raymond did not answer. In fact, the news seemed to have stunned him.

"Her ladyship quite well?" said Mr. Carlton, retiring from the carriage-window, and speaking in his natural tone.

"Quite well, thank you," replied Raymond.

"And Miss Sylvester?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied Raymond.

"Well, I am glad to see you out. A pleasant ride," said the lawyer, cheerfully, and giving the rein to his horse. "Good morning."

"Good morning," said Raymond.

And Mr. Carlton rode off.

The Sylvester horses, which had been showing signs of impatience, and had required the coachman's utmost skill to hold them in, gave a few plunges, and went on again. Straight on the road to Brooklyn. He felt he could not help it.

(To be continued.)

"MIRANDOLINE."

"**W**HAT is mirandoline, Mary?" asked Charles. "I heard Aunt Ellen speak of it, the other day, and did not know what she meant."

"I am sure it must be pretty, for I like the name," said little Emily.

"It is not always a good plan to judge flowers by their names," replied Mary; "but in this case you are right, for mirandoline is a very beautiful hyacinth; first, let me describe it, and afterwards I shall tell you of one I had a long time ago."

"Oh!" exclaimed Charles, "we are going to have another of Mary's flower stories. I do believe there

is not a plant that grows, about which she does not recollect something interesting."

Emily clapped her hands in delight, and said, "Tell us quickly, Mary, what mirandoline is like, then we shall better understand the story, and can make a little picture in our minds to look at while you are speaking."

"Well, imagine a tall white hyacinth, with long green leaves."

"Oh, yes!" interrupted Emily, "I know hyacinths; mamma has a great many at home. She says they grow better than most other flowers in a city. Is mirandoline a double white hyacinth?"

"No," replied Mary, "it is single; but has large bells which cluster round the stalk. It is purely white, and looks like wax."

"Wax, Mary! surely real flowers are prettier than wax?"

"Certainly, Emily. I only meant that mirandoline has a soft, waxy appearance, though much more beautiful than any imitation could be. Man's utmost ingenuity cannot bear comparison with the works of God."

"Emily," said Charles, "why do you ask so many questions? you are keeping us from hearing the story."

"I shall not try your patience longer," said Mary.

"When I was about nine years old I went to spend a little time with my uncle and aunt, at a quiet watering-place, where they had taken a house for the season. At first I was delighted with the change of scene; but, as the novelty wore away, I began to feel lonely, having no companion of my own age. My aunt took me to walk every day; but when she went out to visit, or sat with my uncle, instead of employing myself reading or working, as she wisely advised, I used to wander about listlessly, often wishing myself at home.

"There was a grass-plot before the door, surrounded by a railing, with a gate opening on the public road, and there I spent a good deal of my time. Frequently I had observed a little girl, about my own age, walking in the garden of the adjoining house, and longed much to make her acquaintance. She had long, golden hair, blue eyes, and a lovely colour in her cheek. I noticed she was much quieter than myself; she never ran or played, but used to walk sedately back and forward, or sit on the grass when the day was warm. She had a grave, thoughtful expression, although her countenance was sweet and gentle. I think she must have observed how often I watched her, and been anxious to gratify my desire, for one day she came close to the railings which divided us, and, seeing a large bunch of wild flowers in my hand, which I had gathered during my last walk, she said, 'I am very fond of flowers; please let me look at that pretty bunch.'

"I drew near, glad that the ice was at length broken between us. I handed it to her, and as she admired the flowers one by one, told her where each had been gathered, and of the nice walk I had taken.

"Do you ever go for a country ramble," I asked, "or climb the rocks for plants?"

"I should like to do so," she replied; "but I cannot, for it tires me to walk far; however, I sometimes go to the beach in search of shells."

"I am sorry you cannot walk," I said, "for I could show you such pretty places. All I can do is to bring you flowers. Will you take these now?"

"Thank you," said the little girl; "I shall like so much arranging them in the new vase mamma bought for me. It is very pleasant amusement, settling flowers, but I seldom get any. We live in town, and only come to the country for a short time every summer, to make me stronger. I like being here very much, and think I shall enjoy it even more

now, when you bring me flowers, and tell me of all the pretty places I cannot see."

"Oh, yes; I shall come out very often, and tell you of everything I have seen, for I like you greatly. But what shall I call you?"

"My name," she said, "is Violet. You see I am called after a flower, which accounts for my being so fond of my sister plants."

"And she smiled so sweetly, that I felt no one could help loving her.

"I suppose you are the only flower in your own home?" I said, "for I believe it is difficult to make plants grow in towns."

"We have hyacinths," she replied. "And mamma has promised to give me a root this year for myself, and a pretty blue glass for it to grow in. She had one last year, called mirandoline. I liked the name, but the blossom was even prettier; and mine is to be the same. I am to plant it late in autumn, and it will blow in spring. It is interesting to watch a root, which looks withered and dead, shoot out a fresh, green bud, and then a lovely flower; it is like being in the grave, and rising again in renewed beauty at the last day. I was very ill last winter, but the nice warm summer has made me almost quite well."

"Just at this moment my aunt called me to come in, so saying good-bye hastily to my new friend, I ran to the house. From this time we met frequently. She used to spend evenings with me, and I with her, and sometimes we were able to enjoy short walks together, and grew fonder of each other every day. It was therefore with great sorrow I was obliged to part from her, in order to return home. She had been much stronger latterly, and during our last walk had spoken hopefully of our meeting again the following summer.

"The cold weather was now commencing, and Violet remained in the country only a short time after our departure. I had a pleasant letter from her on her return to town, in which she wrote: 'My mirandoline is just budding. I often wish you were here to watch it with me; but perhaps you may see it when in blossom.'

"This was my first friendship, and dearly I loved the gentle little girl. At first she wrote frequently, afterwards her letters came at longer intervals. In one she said: 'Do not think, my own Mary, that I am forgetting you, because I do not write as much as I used. Mamma will not let me, for I feel very weak and ill; but do write to me often, as I take great pleasure in reading your letters.'

"These lines sent a pang through my heart; however, I continued to write as she had requested, until I got her last, written evidently with great difficulty: 'My own Mary, I want to write to you once more, though I can hardly hold the pencil, I am so weak. You will never see me in this world, but do not be sorry, for we shall meet again where violets do not fade. I love my Saviour very much, and I am almost glad he is going to take his little earthly flower to grow in his heavenly garden. I have asked

mamma to send you my mirandoline, in its pretty blue glass, to keep for my sake. I shall never see its beauty; but I shall be like it, pure and spotless, washed in my Saviour's blood, and made "whiter than snow." I cannot write more, for I am tired—

"Here it broke off suddenly, and was enclosed in one from her mother, saying she would write and let us know when her dear child was taken, which she feared must be very soon. In a few days the dreaded letter arrived, announcing that little Violet was transplanted to the garden above. 'This was my first great grief, and I bore it badly.

"The mirandoline arrived shortly after, carefully packed, and quite uninjured. I placed it in the window of my own room, and as the blossoms expanded one by one, I gazed at their beauty, and thought, 'My friend has been taken from me, but I have been given this lovely flower as an image of what she is now, clothed in the white robe of Christ's righteousness.' But every image must be broken, and oh! this was a sore trial to me."

"Broken, Mary! surely your beautiful hyacinth was not broken; how sorry you must have been!"

"I shall tell you how it occurred. My little cousin, Harry, a child of four years old, was staying with us at the time, and, as is not unfrequent with little fellows of that age, he was very troublesome, and, being a great pet at home, had been allowed to do pretty much as he pleased. My mother had strictly forbidden him to enter my room, or touch anything belonging to others without leave; but, alas! poor little Harry had no idea of obedience, and one day when I was returning from a walk with her, he ran to meet us in great delight, with what he called a nice white plume stuck in his cap. Fancy my horror when I recognised my mirandoline blossom! I rushed to my room, unable to believe so dreadful a thing could be real. Alas! there on the floor, in a hundred pieces, lay the pretty blue glass, of which poor Violet had been so proud—the water spilled, and the root thrown at some distance, after the stalk had been ruthlessly torn from it. I felt overpowered at the sorrowful sight, and could only sit down among the ruins and weep, oh! so bitterly. I fear there was a dark spirit of revenge in my heart towards Harry, as I muttered between my sobs, 'Nasty, mischievous, spiteful, little monkey!'

"Presently my mother entered, carrying in her hand the broken flower, which she had rescued from the boy's cap. She found it very hard to pacify me; I flung the beauteous flower from me, exclaiming—'It is gone, destroyed—like everything I care for.'

"My child," she answered, 'this is wrong. You are allowing your evil passions to get the better of you. I know this is a great trial. I am not surprised you are sorry, but we must try to make the best of it. I shall buy you a flower-pot, in which you can replant your mirandoline. It will not be so fine the second year, but you will still have the precious root. You can put this pretty blossom in water upon your table; it will last nearly as long as if still growing. You know, dear, it would have faded soon, in

any case; nothing in this world, however beautiful, can last for ever.'

"But, mamma," I said, 'was it not very spiteful in Harry to destroy my greatest treasure? Will you not punish him for his disobedience?'

"Poor Harry is very young, and scarcely knows right from wrong. He has been much petted, and is unused to punishment. While his maid went downstairs for a few minutes, he darted into your room, probably forgetting that it was forbidden ground, and, seeing the pretty flower, no doubt longed to have it. He was not capable of understanding your fondness for the plant, or I am sure would not have been so ill-natured; but if you wish me to punish him, I will do so.'

"Oh, yes, mamma; do, I should like it."

"Mary, would the punishment of Harry restore your plant to beauty? Would it make you feel happier? Is it what your friend Violet would advise, were she here? Above all, was it thus Jesus acted towards those who ill-treated him, when on earth? Consider, dear, and let me know in the morning what you wish. I shall not punish him until then."

"I was very sad, and I am sorry to say, out of temper, all that evening. I went early to bed, and lay awake a long time, thinking of what my mother had said, and of Violet. I prayed earnestly to be enabled to forgive little Harry, though he had grieved me so much. I then arose, placed the mirandoline blossom in water, after which my mind became more composed, and I slept. Next morning I went early to my mother to beg she would not punish Harry, and when he came into the room I kissed him as usual. He threw his arms round my neck fondly, and said, 'Mary, I am sorry I broke your pretty flower. I will never touch anything not my own again.'

"I do not say this promise was at all times strictly kept; but the little fellow improved, and I certainly felt happier than I should have done, had he been punished at my desire."

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. Where reigned a king for seven days alone?
2. What tribute-gatherer did Israel stone?
3. Who o'er the host of Reuben had command?
4. Where died a king by his own children's hand?
5. With whom did Paul his cloak at Troas leave?
6. From whom did Paul in prison help receive?
7. What king in sheep and wool his tribute paid?
8. What heathen towa was of God's ark afraid?
9. Where Israel laid its leader in his grave.
10. The town which Joshua to Caleb gave.
11. What governor to King Darius wrote?
12. The town where Joab falsely Abner smote.
13. Where to a false god Ahaziah sent.
14. Where in disguise a mighty monarch went.
15. What prince for Judah first his offering gave?
16. Who vainly sought God's word from fire to save?
Sin reigns on earth awhile;
But time is fleeting fast;
The end draws nigh, when Christ shall reign
Over his own at last.